



RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG POLICE PERSONNEL: A REVIEW STUDY

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Abstract

This review study aims to provide an overview of the role of resilience and social support in promoting psychological well-being and mental health among police personnel. It also seeks to explore the factors that contribute to police officers' resilience, and their social support they receive from their colleagues, family, and friends. Resilience refers to the ability to adapt to stress and adversity, while social support refers to the resources that individuals receive from their surroundings. According to the research studies, social support and resilience are mediated by one another. The alleviation of PTSD, depression, and anxiety symptoms among police officers may be facilitated by focusing on these two psychological factors.

Keywords: Resilience, Social support, Police officers, Mental health, Psychological well-being

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Introduction

Police work has been widely recognized as one of the most stressful professions in comparison to other occupations (Johnson et al., 2005). Law enforcement is a demanding profession that can subject officers to traumatic events, long hours, and high-stress situations. They are seen as crucial skills (courage, assertiveness, persuasiveness, physical stamina, active listening, critical thinking) for high-risk occupations, particularly for police officers, who must be able to deal with and adjust to stressful situations brought on by operational or possibly traumatic pressures (McCanlies et al. 2014). By examining these factors, researchers hope to identify strategies and interventions that can help officers develop greater resilience, cope with stress more effectively, and maintain a positive work-life balance. Ultimately, this research has the potential to improve the mental health and well-being of police officers and help them better serve and protect their communities.

Resilience is the capacity of a person to change and recover from trying circumstances, such as trauma, hardship, or stress. It is the capacity to keep a positive attitude, handle pressure and hardship, and proceed in the face of challenges. People who have resilience, coping skills, and emotional intelligence are more likely to have better overall well-being than those who have lower resilience, according to a study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. They are also more likely to have better life satisfaction (Lacomba-Trejo et al., 2022). Resilience in the context of police officers refers to their capacity to adjust to and recover from the physical, mental, and emotional demands of their work. Throughout the course of their work, police officers are exposed to a variety of traumatic and stressful situations, such as violent crimes, mishaps, natural disasters, and other emergency situations. Police officers who have the ability to positively adapt to situations at work are better able to handle the strain of effort-reward imbalance (ERI; Paton et al., 2013). Police personnel need to create effective coping mechanisms and support networks in order to retain their resilience. Given the hard and frequently painful nature of their profession, resilience is a key ability for police officers. Resilience is a skill that may be learnt and improved through time rather than being a fixed attribute or personality trait. People can increase their resilience and learn the techniques and abilities needed to overcome adversity and prosper in trying situations via experience and practice. Resilience can also be aided by having a support structure, a sense of community, and a sense of purpose.

The term "social support" describes the numerous kinds of help, comfort, and care that people get from other people, such as family, friends, coworkers, or community members. Given the particular strains and difficulties that police officers confront at work, social assistance is a crucial component of their well-being. In order to help people, cope with stress, social support refers to the provision of resources through social networks, such as family, friends, and coworkers, including emotional support, information, and material support. Social support can be advantageous to police personnel in a number of ways. For instance, social support can give officers a sense of acceptance, affirmation, and a stress reducer. Social support can also aid in the growth of coping mechanisms, encourage healthy coping methods, and boost resilience in the face of stress and trauma in officers.

Police personnel across the world are subjected to potentially horrific occurrences. For example, in Canada, 50.2% of federal police officers and 36.7% of municipal/provincial cops tested positive for one or more mental illnesses (Carleton et al., 2018). The causes of stress among British police officers and discovered that, on average, organizational problems were seen as more stressful than operational ones. Police personnel have been found to have suicide rates that are many times greater than those of age-matched groups. Also discovered that the amount of stress faced by police personnel was significantly influenced by their workload (Collins & Gibbs, 2003). Demonstrated that there are links between officers' alcohol use and stress levels or their social interactions inside the police subculture (Lindsay & Shelley, 2009). In order to collect data on trauma exposure, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, and other stigmatizing factors (including negative preconceptions, attributions, planned behavior, and attitudes towards getting treatment), active-duty police officers were recruited using an online survey. Findings showed that compared to the general population, police personnel have greater rates of current PTSD and trauma exposure (Soomro & Yanos, 2019). The findings indicate that the prevalence of mental health disorders among police officers is more than double that previously documented in mixed samples of first responders, and that it is related with low social support, occupational stress, and maladaptive coping techniques symptoms (Syed et al., 2020). According to research on police mortality, police personnel are more likely than the general population to suffer from stress-related disorders (Ménard & Arter, 2013). As well as to routine work

environment stressors such as long shifts with irregular hours, discrimination, and inadequate resources (Lieberman et al., 2002). Both Post traumatic events (PTEs) and routine work stressors have been shown to place officers at increased risk for stress-related psychopathology including post-traumatic stress disorder (Maguen et al., 2009; Marmar et al., 2006), depression, sleep disturbances (Neylan et al., 2002), anxiety, somatization, alcohol abuse, aggressive behavior (Gershon, Lin, & Li, 2002), and increased rates of cardiovascular and gastrointestinal disorders, divorce, and suicide (Violanti, 1995). The Police officers experienced high levels of stress during their work in special conditions (Deflem & Sutphin, 2009; McCanlies et al., 2018; Sukabdi, 2016; Sommer et al., 2017; Varano & Schafer, 2012; Bonkiewicz & Ruback, 2012).

Officers are taught to remain unbiased and emotion-free in the face of extreme grief, loss, or the shock of death (Hoffer et al., 2010). Police personnel with a high level of self-resilience may be protected against PTSD symptoms caused by critical episodes (Lee et al., 2016). Officers are regularly exposed to a variety of PTEs, including threat of injury or death to themselves, their colleagues, and people in the communities they serve (Cottler et al., 1992). Law enforcement personnel with experience can handle stressful situations that are comparable to previous encounters (Beauchamp, 2020). The study demonstrates the significance of resilience elements for managing workplace stress, with the commitment dimension of hardiness playing a crucial role (Fyhn et al., 2016). Enhancing officer wellness and fostering a culture of stress resistance by teaching useful self-regulation techniques (Weltman et al., 2014). The negative effect of emotional coping on resilience is consistent (Pole et al. 2006). Resilience was positively associated with the general, physical, and psychological realms (Tavares et al., 2021).

The most essential characteristics of resilient retired police officers were communicating work-related concerns with friends and family and avoiding from distancing coping mechanisms (Pole et al. 2006). Statistically significant link between social support from friends' homes and well-being (Balmer et al., 2014). While there were numerous characteristics of resilient police officers, communicating work-related issues with friends and family and avoiding distance coping mechanisms were crucial (Pole et al., 2006). When the emotional support received through talking to someone about a difficult situation is utilized to control emotional responses, it serves as an emotion-focused coping technique. Numerous

studies conducted in a range of contexts have demonstrated that social support buffers the detrimental effects of stress (Ganster et al., 1986). Police officers suffer less stress and had a lower likelihood of abandoning their jobs when they have more social support from friends and family (Lord, 1996). Social support, emotional support, educational support, material assistance, and assessment support all consistently exhibited a favorable link with resilience (Lee, Jeong, & Choi, 2021).

The psychological and sociological variables influencing police officers' choices to use justifiable violence (Cojean et al., 2020). Higher levels of peer support were linked to considerably lower levels of PTSD symptoms (Syed et al., 2020). Identified significant correlations between officers' working health and factors including excessive hours, organizational pressure, and a lack of occupational assistance (Purba & Demou, 2019). Police personnel may experience stress as a result of their impression of public support, society's unfavorable sentiments towards police officers, and bad or misleading media coverage (Sun & Payne, 2004). Social support mechanisms that can help police personnel recover from stressful events (Evans et al., 2013). Support for women police officers is directly correlated with perceived police efficacy and satisfaction (Nalla & Nam, 2020). Social support lessens difficulties with self-efficacy and work-life balance and encourages police officers' work engagement (Wolter et al., 2019). Resilience and social support are linked to greater life satisfaction and less depressive symptoms. The capacity of an officer to deal with depressive symptoms may be enhanced by focusing on and constructing these characteristics (McCanlies et al., 2018).

The association between distress and work events was tempered by seeking social support, while the relationship between distress and life events was tempered by emotion-focused coping (Patterson, 2003). Occupational stresses (under-utilization of abilities, quantitative burden, and employment future uncertainties) and various forms of social support are associated to individual psychological strain, according to a study of 121 police officers in a Midwestern state. The buffering theory was wrong about how professional pressures and instrumental social support interacted, and explanations are given for this "reverse buffering" outcome. Additionally, compared to nonsupervisory police officers, police officers in supervisory jobs had less stress and greater social support (Kaufmann & Beehr, 1989). Improved social support can promote resilience (Tatebe et al., 2020).

The inclusion of a measure of social desirability was crucial with this population as previous work with police officers has found a strong positive link between social desirability scores and self-reported ability to cope with the stressors of police work (Pole et al. 2006). an individual's cognitive and behavioral actions to manage internal or external stressors or problems which exceed their personal sources (Balmer et al., 2014). Study show that resilience influences the link between PTSD symptoms and social support. The decrease of PTSD symptoms in police personnel may be facilitated by focusing on social support and resilience (McCanlies et al., 2017). For reduce workplace stress, it is vital to establish a programme that promotes resilience and family support. There are some significant similarities among the three concepts of psychology, toughness, and resilience. The main features that arise in many definitions of resilience are dealing with trauma and adversity, positive adaptation, and resilience as a dynamic process (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013., Pangallo et al. 2015., & Aburn et al. 2016). In police employees, social support has been associated with reduced post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. Resilience and social support are linked to greater life satisfaction and less depressive symptoms. The capacity of an officer to deal with depressive symptoms may be enhanced by focusing on and constructing these characteristics (McCanlies et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Resilience and social support are major components in promoting the well-being and mental health of police officers. The high-risk nature of police work can lead to negative outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). However, officers can better manage the difficulties they encounter at work by developing resilience through a variety of coping mechanisms and having access to powerful social support networks. It is important for law enforcement agencies to prioritize the well-being of their officers by implementing policies and programs that foster resilience and social support. By doing so, they can create a more supportive work environment and ultimately improve the overall health and effectiveness of their police force.

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